

THE
Grand Question
RESOLVED:
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Having PROTESTED
To Defend to the uttermost of his P O W E R,
The TRUE
Protestant Religion,
WITH THE
Rights and Liberties
Of all his SUBJECTS:

But if they, fearing that he will Violate this his
PROTESTATION, take up Arms to prevent it, what may be Judged hereof?

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RESOLVED

QUEST.

A King having Protested to defend to the uttermost of his Power the true Protestant Religion, with the Rights and Liberties of all his Subjects; but if they fearing that he will violate this his Protestantation, take up Arms to prevent it, what may be judged of this kind of Proceeding?

THIS Question being very weighty, ought to be managed with much Caution and Candidness. In order hereto, it will be requisite to propound some Questions or Doubts, which do naturally issue out of the propounded Question, for rectifying and settling the Minds of all Christian Subjects.

Quest. I:

Is it not better in disputable Mysteries of State, for the Subjects to commend the whole matter to God, the Righteous Judge, than to take up Arms against their King, whom we are not to curse in our heart, much less to fight against him with our hands?

I I.

God saith, *The Heart of the King is unsearchable*; how then can any man know, whether or no a King will decline from his Oath? And if so, why should any Subject oppose him by raising of Arms, because he feareth such a Declining?

III.

God saith, *The Kings heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever it pleaseth him*; if then a King decline from his Protestation, God if it please him can again reduce him to it. Is it not then safer for Subjects to rely upon Gods Word and Providence, than to take up Arms against their Sovereign?

IV.

God gives this counsel, *I counsel thee to keep the Kings Commandment; and that in regard of the Oath of God*, Eccles. 8. 2. So far then we ought to obey the King, as obliged by our Oaths, which oblige us, and that with relation to the fifth Commandment. If then Arms be taken up against the King, is there no violation of any Promise, Vow, or Oath? and is there no Commandment of God rejected?

V.

We hold this Assertion to be true, *Sanguis Martyrum est semen Ecclesiae*; The Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church: If then the Subjects perceive that their King breaketh his Oath, were it not better for them to dye Martyrs, and thus to spend their Blood in the Cause of Religion, than to spill it in a Civil War? doth he offend that dyeth a Martyr?

VI.

St. Paul teacheth us, *Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin*. When therefore Subjects wage Warre against their King, those that are

are Ignorant or misinformed, have no ground, or Faith, to build this their fighting upon: who then shall answer for the Blood of these men, if it be shed in such a Civil War? Shall not they who should inform and do not, or else misinform? And how shall men thus slain, and that dye in their sin, be able to answer at that great day of Judgment, whose suddenness of death was hereby occasioned?

VII.

Moral honesty teacheth Men to keep their Promises, much more their deliberate solemn Oaths. Christianity requireth the same, yea, though it be to the hurt of him that sweareth. For these and the like Reasons, every good Man, who considerably observeth his Promise and Oath, may be truly offended against all those who will not give credence to his promise, nor yet to his Oath. Can a King be well pleased, when this hard lot befalleth him? Will he like to be accounted a Liar upon a meer surmise without any proof.

VIII.

David's Heart smote him after he had cut off the Skirt of Saul's Robe privily. If Arms should be raised up against a King, and his Life in danger to be cut off thereby, would no Mans heart, who had a hand in such a businels, be so tender as to smite him?

IX.

Christ commandeth, *Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsars*; namely, Toll, Tribute, Custom, &c. if then such things as these be detained from a King, and withall an attempt made to beat him with his own Weapons; how is Christ's Commandment observed and obeyed? Are the Arms which are *Cæsars*, to be rendred to *Cæsar* to his destruction?

X.

Christ saith, Blessed are they that are persecuted for Righteousness sake. And thus the Case standeth; if a King for-

get his duty towards God and Man, and doth cruelly persecute his Subjects; are not such Subjects so persecuted for their firm adherence to a Righteous cause, blessed, in that they patiently endure it? But where hath Christ taught us that they are blessed that persecute their King at any time.

XI.

Where the Word of a King is, there is Power; and who may say unto him, What dost thou? Eccles. 8. 4. May not these Words rightly understood, and wisely applyed to the Conscience, perswade a Man to debate the matter, and to expostulate with himself, saying, What dost thou? before he presume to rectifie a King's Errours with the drawn Sword, except it be with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God? For the King of Kings saith of an Earthly King, who may say unto him, *What dost thou?*

XII.

David asketh this Question concerning Saul, who was a very wicked King, *Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's Anointed and be guiltless?* If any Man might, why not David, who was causlesly and violently persecuted by Saul, and who was also to succeed him in his Throne? yet his Conscience taught him not to Right his own wrongs, but he waited the good hour, till God should be pleased either to turn his Heart, or to end his Dayes. Who believeth not, that David was endued and extraordinarily guided by Gods Spirit, as in other matters, so in this particular behaviour towards Saul? And who then will not resolve and pray as David did? *The Lord forbid (saith he) that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's Anointed.* David prayed thus after Saul had violated that trust, which his Subjects repos'd in him.

XIII.

God directs us to two means of pacifying an angred Prince either by forbearance, or by giving a soft Answer: the Words are plain; *By long forbearing is a Prince persuad'd,*

ded, and a soft Answer breaketh the Bone. But when Arms are taken up, where is forbearing? And when the Sword is drawn, what hope is there that a soft Answer will persuade?

XIV.

The Names which are given to Kings and Queens by God himself, should be very much regarded by all good Men: for they are called, *Nursing Fathers*, and *Nursing Mothers*, yea, gods. Is it not unnatural to unsheathe the Sword against Father or Mother? Is it not impious to unsheathe the Sword against him who is the Supreme of all Earthen gods? *Touch not mine Anointed*, saith God Almighty; and will he allow his Subjects to fight against him, who is the Supreme Ruler, and God's Vicegerent upon Earth?

X V.

The wisest King, being taught by the King of Kings teacheth thus; *The fear of a King is as the roaring of a Lyon; who so provoketh him to Anger, finneth against his own Soul.* If any Subjects take up Arms again their King, are they not hereby likely to provoke him to great anger? And hereby raise up a great Fear, whereby to terrifie themselves? And is it no sin, thus to provoke a King?

X VI.

The King of Israel spake thus to Benhadad, *Let not him that girdeth on his Harness boast himself, as he that putteth it off.* When Subjects raise War against their Prince, it's probable they are confident of Victory; else why should they take them up? And if they be thus Confident, let them Remember what Abab said to Benhadad, and so much the more let them do this, because many wise and Godly Learned Men affirm that Subjects ought not to take up Arms against their Sovereign; and why should the Counsel of wise Men be utterly rejected as not fit to be our Counsellors?

X VII. When

XVII.

When King *David* purposed to march forth in Battel against his Rebellious Son *Absalom*, his Loyal and Loving Subjects spake thus to him, *Thou shalt not go forth*; and why? Because, say they, *Thou art worth Ten thousand of us*. Would not *David's* Subjects willingly permit him to go forth to Battel, and will any Subjects go to Battel against their King? Was *David* worth Ten thousand of his Subjects; and durst any go forth to Battel against him, who if he should be slain (and it is too probable in such a Case he may) shall not a King's Blood cry as loud for Vengeance, as the Blood of Thousands of Subjects?

XVIII.

Those that dare adventure to wage War against their Sovereign, may be too ready to censure, and perhaps to condemn all those that be not so forward in this action as themselves; and if they thus censure and condemn, what Answer can they frame to those Questions, which God propo-
seth? *Who art thou that judgest another Mans Servant* (which I conceive may not be unaptly interpreted the Kings Loyal Subject?) *to his own Master he standeth or falleth*. *Why dost thou judge thy Brother?* Or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. And then it will appear, whether those that take up Arms against their Sovereign, or those that refuse, are in the right.

XIX.

Our Blessed Saviour was so desirous to shew all due respect unto *Cæsar*, that for the expressing thereof he wrought a miraculous work, there being, (at his Command to *Peter*) a Fish taken out of the Sea, in whose mouth was found a piece of Money, which he commanded to be given for Tribute. And did our Saviour work so miraculously, because he would not offend against *Cæsar*, and shall not all good Subjects rather chuse to suffer any indignity or loss, than to omit, or do any thing, which damnifie their King? And when Arms are taken up against him,

him ; is he not damned and dishonoured ?

XX.

There be three Commandments, which God hath joined together, and they are thus delivered to us : *My Son fear thou the Lord, and the King ; and meddle not with them which are given to change.* And what is said in Scripture elsewhere ? *A threefold Cord is not easily broken.* If then the true fear of God, and of the King, and therewith a settled Resolution not to meddle with them which are given to Change, be all twisted together, and treasured up in our hearts ; and if in our Lives we express a fruitful practice of them, then is indeed evidenced our Sonship to God ; unto whom he giveth these three Commandments ; whereof if one be broken, the other is also violated : for he that feareth not God, how doth he fear his King, or abstain from them which are given to change ? He that feareth not the King how doth he fear God, or take care to keep his Commandment, namely, to fear the King and not to meddle with them which are given to change ? Or he that is given to change, how like is he to that God, which changeth not, or like to a good King which Ruleth by his Constant known Laws ? Therefore if Subjects rise up in Arms against their Liege Lord and King, are they not likely to break one of these Commandments ? And if we fail in one Point of God's Commandments, do we not thereby incur the guilt of breaking all ?

XXI.

The Holy Ghost doth rectifie the Hearts and Practice of all Loyal Subjects towards their Kings, saying, *Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the Ordinance of God,* Rom. 13. 2. And who was Emperor at that time, when this Direction was given ? Was it not *Claudius* that Prophane Infidel, and cruel Tyrant ? much more then should all Christian Subjects forbear to take up Arms against a Christian King, who, by reason that he is a Christian King, is therefore much more to be honoured and obeyed, than those wicked and profligate Emperours *Claudius*, or *Nero*, or *Julian the Apostate* ; and yet the Christian Souldiers, who were more than

the Heathenish, would not resist him. And why may we not believe, that they were so temperate and obedient, because they had learned, and purposed by God's grace, to practice that which followeth in the fifth Verse of the same Chapter, *Wherfore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake?* They would not provoke a wicked Emperour to wrath, and their own Conscience (being instructed by God's Word) taught them thus to do.

XXII.

By me Kings Reign, saith God. God himself not only setteth the Good, but wicked Kings upon their Thrones. It was God, that gave the Scepter to wicked *Saul*, and *David* would by no means molest him in his Government, much less undertake to War against him, in hope to wrest the Scepter out of his hand. Is it Christian wisdom to fight against God's Ordinance? For such Warriours, in effect, fight against God; and if we enter the lists with God, are not we like to lose the Victory?

XXIII.

After that King *David* had committed those two gross sins of Adultery and Murther, observe in what manner he maketh his Confession before God for them: *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.* Against thee only (saith St. Ambrose) because *David* was a King, and was bound to no Law: for a King (as the same Author addeth, and with him many Reverend Authors concur) that a King is not bound over to Punishment by any Law, but is set free from them by his Sovereign Authority. Therefore *Nathan* the Prophet admonisheth *David* to expiate his Sins before God Almighty by humble Repentance, and lively Faith; but he denounceth not the Law against him, whereby to inflict on him the Legal punishment of an Adulterer and a Murderer; herein he left the whole Matter to God's own disposalment. Whosoever then presume to fight against their King (and by this affront do attempt no small punishment both of his Mind and Body) are they perhaps the more forward to make such an assault, because they take themselves to be more Wise and Judicious than *Ambrose*?

But

But who dare compare himself with the Prophet Nathan?

XXIV.

If a wicked King should furiously rage against Christ's Church, yet should the People of God Solace themselves exceedingly in this, that *Christ hath built it upon a Rock*; and they ought to believe, that though it may be, and often is much shaken, yet it cannot be overthrown: and that it may stand the more firmly, must not the People of God perform their Duty, and attend Christ's Commandments, and withall firmly establish their Hearts upon the gracious promises therewith annexed and delivered in these words, *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened to you.* Prayer is the Christian Armour; which all distressed Subjects ought to put on, and if they use it aright, even he Gates of Hell shall not prevail against them. The devout Jews thus Armed themselves, when King *Ahasuerus* had granted forth a Decree for their utter overthrow. They did not Mutiny, much less take up the Sword, to vindicate their Religion and Liberty: and why should not all good Subjects in these dayes, behave themselves as the Jews then did? And so much the rather, lest Christ's words prevail against them, viz, *All they that take the Sword shall perish with the Sword.*

XXV.

A Divine Sentence, saith Solomon, is in the Lips of the King, his Mouth transgresseth not in Judgement. The Lord affordeth more than ordinary assistance, and direction to Kings; and therefore when *Saul*, a very wicked King, was by God's appointment to sway the Scepter, we read, *God gave him another Heart, even the Spirit of Government:* therefore should not all Loyal Subjects rather suspect themselves in an Errour, than their King. Not but that a King, is but a Man and so subject to failure; but being a Man in extraordinary place, and appointment, why may not he also obtain extraordinary aid and Direction from God? And then why should Subjects take up the Sword to rectifie the Errour of their King?

XXVI. *The*

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The Wrath of a King (as saith Gods Word) is as Messengers of Death, but a wise Man will pacifie it. When Arms are taken up against a King, doubtlesly hereby the Kings wrath is very much incensed; and therefore should not all Subjects be more ready in shewing their wisdom in pacifying, than in exasperating his wrath? God grant the one, and prevent the other in every Nation.

XXVII.

The Kings wrath is as the roaring of a Lyon; but his favour is as the Dew upon the Grass. Who will provoke a Lyon to roar, and then come within the reach of his Chain? Who will provoke their King to wrath by taking up Arms, and presume they shall not come within the reach of his Verge? If his favour be as dew upon the Grass, will not his provoked wrath become as Fire among the Stubble? And doth not every Subject rather desire to be refreshed with such a dew, than to be consumed with a Fire of their own kindling?

XXVIII.

There be four things stately, as in *Prov. 30. 29, 30, 31.* and among them a King is truly Majestical; *against whom there is no rising up,* saith God: and dare any true servant of God, and true-hearted Subject do the contrary, by rising up against their King? And is not raising of Arms an arising against him? If then Arms be thus raised, how can any that are thus forward, promise to themselves Victory over their King, whom they presume to resist? Or how can they dispence with their own Consciences, seeing this is the express Word of God, *Against him there is no rising up?*

XXIX. Be-

XXIX.

Before any War by any People or Nations be attempted, the Counsel which God giveth, is to be accepted and embraced; and God counselleth thus, *With good advice make War.* But where may such advice be taken? Even where it is plainly and freely given in the Volumn of God's Book, the Bible; which some have and others may wrest to their own destruction. Learned Councils have erred, *Adam* in Paradise erred, the Angels themselves grossly erred; may not wise Men err? and if such Men may err, why not in the particular business of the Subjects rising in Arms against their Prince? Let any that may hold that Position of it's lawfulness, consider, may not an Iron Rod (if any Subjects take up Arms against their King) rather bruise, or harden, than mollifie and make him better?

XXX.

In the Multitude of People is the Kings Honour, but in the want of People is the Destruction of the Prince. When Arms are raised by the Subjects, to reduce, or rather to enforce their King to do what they please; is it not probable, that the Multitude of his People and therewith his Honour shall be diminished? And is not the want of People the destruction of the Prince? God saith so; experience also proveth it to be the destruction both of a King, and of his Kingdom? If then the Subjects truly love God, their King and themselves, is it not a matter of great concernment, and worth their deepest consideration, that by raising of Arms they may Dishonour God, wrong their King, and themselves to their own ruines?

XXXI.

God declareth what we may think of the beginning of Strife, and what also we may judge is likely to be the issue thereof; these words demonstrate it, *The beginning of Strife is as when one letteth out Water; therefore leave off Contention before it be meddled with.* At the first appearance strife may be thought to be very small, and as the Cloud

which *Elijah's Servant* saw arising out of the Sea ; like a Mans hand ; yet that in a short time overspread the whole Heavens, and abundance of Rain did ensue. Abundance of trouble and of Blood-shed may ensue, if but one, or a few hands be first Actors in the raising of Arms : and who can tell how far the Waters of Contention may hereupon flow ? Such bitter Waters as these may be called by the Names which *Isaac* gave to the Wells which his Servants digged, one he called *Esek* (contention) another *Sitnah* (hatred.) Is it not theretore godly Wisdom to embrace God's Counsel, *Leave off contention before it be meddled with* ? And if it have been meddled with, should not all good People pray instantly and heartily, that a Well-spring of Living Waters may be found out, which may be called *Rehoboth* (Room?) And that it may be said of this Nation, now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the Land, by no means entring the Lists of Contention and strife, but in well doing committing our concerns to God, submitting with Patience to him as the Governour, and disposer of all things.

XXXII.

The Apostle Saint *James* hath laid a sure Foundation for all Christian Souldiers to build upon, if with a clear Conscience before God and Man, they be able to answer to those Questions propounded, *From whence come Wars and Fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your Lusts, that war in your Members ?* There is a Lust, or lusting after Profit, Pleasure, vain Glory, whenas too many Men are ready to speak as *Jebu* did ; *Come with me, and see my Zeal for the Lord of Hosts.* And what is the issue and event of such eager thirsting desires ? Believe God in these Words of his, *Ye Lust, and have not ; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain : Ye fight and War, and yet have not, because ye ask not ; ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your Lusts.* And whether or no Subjects taking up Arms against their King be a rectified Zeal, let them consider, and prove for it a Warrant from Gods Word, which are so perswaded.

Let

Let us but observe the Oath of Allegiance;
the Tenor whereof is thus for Word.

I. A. B. do truly and sincerely acknowledge, profess, testify, and declare in my Conscience before God and the World; that our Sovereign Lord King Charles the Second is Lawful and Rightful Heir of this Realm, and of all other his Majesties Dominions and Countreys; and that the Pope neither of himself, nor by any Authority by the Church or See of Rome, or by any other means with any other, hath any power or Authority, to depose the King, or to dispose of any of his Majesties Kingdoms, or Dominions; or to Authorize any Forreign Prince to invade or annoy him, or his Countreys; or to discharge any of his Subjects of their Allegiance and Obedience to his Majesty; or to give License or Leave to any of them to bear Arms, raise Tumults, or to offer any violence or hurt to his Majesties Royal Person, State, or Government, or to any of his Majesties Subjects within his Majesties Dominions.

Also I do swear from my Heart, that notwithstanding any Declaration, or Sentence of Excommunication, or Deprivation, made or granted, or to be made or granted by the Pope, or his Successors, or by any Authority derived, or pretended to be derived from him, or his See, against the said King, his Heirs or Successors, or any Absolution of the said Subjects from their obedience, I wil bear Faith and true Allegiance to his Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, and him and them will defend to the uttermost of my Power; against all Conspiracies and attempts whatsoever, which shall be made against his, or their Persons, their Crown and Dignity, by reason or colour of any such Sentence, or Declaration, or otherwise; and will do my best endeavour to disclose, and make known to his Majesty his Heirs and Successors, all Treason or Traiterous Conspiracies, which I shall know, or hear of, to be againt him or any of them.

And I do further swear, that I do from my Heart abhor, detest, and abjure as impious and Heretical, this Damnable Doctrine, and Position, that Princes which be Excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, may be Deposed, or Murthered by their Subjects, or any other whatsoever.

And I do believe, and am in Conscience resolved, that neither
the

the Pope, nor any Person whatsoever, hath power to absolve me of this Oath, or any part thereof, which I acknowledge by good and full Authority to be lawfully administered unto me, and do renounce all Pardons and Dispensations to the Contrary : And all these things, do plainly, and sincerely acknowledge and swear, according to the express words by me spoken, and according to the plain and common sense and understanding of the same words, without any Equivocation or mental Reservation whatsoever ; and I do make this Recognition and acknowledgment heartily, willingly and truly upon the true Faith of a Christian : so help me God.

Thus in conclusion may we end with this Assertion, that Popery is the worst Enemy to Monarchy, and amongst Protestant Subjects, Papists have most certainly been the instruments of sowing the seeds of discord, in an unweared endeavour to raise in the Mind of the Prince a disaffection to his People, and in the Mind of the People a prejudice against their Prince, the better to accomplish their cursed By, and selfish Ends. Therefore let us unanimously pray to God to instruct the Mind of every King with Wisdom, not to hearken to their cursed Devices, and also of all Subjects not to be deluded to the dishonour of their God, hurt of their Prince, and ruine of themselves, to any unnatural Rebellion against their Natural Lord and King. But, to conclude, if so be any Prince should command any thing contrary to the Divine will, as revealed to us in the Scriptures, *Which should we obey God or Man, judge ye.* But doubtless though Paul would refuse in that case to yield active obedience, yet not passive, so as not by force of Arms to resist his Prince. And therefore let us have the Christian prudence, viz, with a rectified Conscience, and unbyassed inclination, duly to weigh these propounded Reasons, and Quæries, and the Natural and Scriptural inferences thereupon deduced, that we may become Gods true servants, and the Kings truly Loyal Subjects.

F I N I S.

